



Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity



COMMUNIQUÉ

TOWARDS A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH CIVIL AVIATION FOR PROTECTING LIFE ON EARTH

Montreal 30 June 2008. Air transport is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. Last year, 2.2 billion passengers and 35 per cent of exports of goods were transported by airplanes. The industry has an economic impact equivalent to 8 per cent of global gross domestic product and generates 32 million jobs worldwide. It is estimated that 40 per cent of international tourists travel by air. Air passenger traffic is expected to grow at an average rate of 5 per cent per year over the next 20 years. Over the next five years, the annual number of passengers within Asia and Pacific will increase to 279 million. In the Middle East, a threefold increase in passenger numbers is expected in the next 20 years. Engaging the aviation industry as a partner for achieving the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity is essential. The preparations for the International Year of Biodiversity, to be celebrated in 2010, offers a unique opportunity to engage the civil-aviation sector as a partner in the global biodiversity campaign focusing on children and youth of today and the educated citizens of tomorrow.

On 27 June 2008, Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, visited the headquarters of Airbus SAS in Toulouse, France. Last year, Airbus, with its 100,000 direct and indirect employees, delivered 453 aircraft and has 8,835 orders from 300 customers. The Executive Secretary was welcomed by Mr. Fabrice Brégier, Airbus Chief Operating Officer, and had a bilateral meeting with Dr. Rainer Ohler, the Senior Vice-President for Public Affairs and Communications, as well as Ms Andrea Debanne, the Vice-President for Communication. A high-level meeting was also convened with other senior officials of relevant departments of Airbus including the head of eco-efficiency and the head of environmental policy. The Executive Secretary made a presentation on the unprecedented challenges of the loss of biodiversity, compounded by climate change, in more a more urbanized world and the need to engage all the stakeholders, including business community, in the fight to protect life on Earth for the benefit of present and future generation.

To this end, Dr. Djoghlaif briefed senior officials of Airbus of the results of the Bonn Biodiversity Summit, held in May 2008 and the preparation of the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit, to be held in October 2010, which will coincide with the celebration of the International Year of Biodiversity. He also gave a presentation on the biodiversity and business initiative adopted by the 5,000 participants in the Bonn biodiversity meeting for achieving the target of reducing substantially the rate of loss of biodiversity by 2010, a commitment adopted in Johannesburg in September 2002 by the 110 Heads of State and Government attending the World Summit on Sustainable Development. In 2001, European leaders decided at the Goteborg Summit to stop the loss of biodiversity in the European Union by 2010.

The senior officials of Airbus were informed of the elements of the strategy for the celebration of International Year of Biodiversity in 2010, as adopted by the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity, held in Bonn in May 2008. They were also briefed on the Green Wave Initiative—a global biodiversity campaign to bond the children and youth of the world with nature and to create bonds among themselves. The initiative brings together students and teachers from around the world to raise awareness about biodiversity and to reduce its loss. The Green Wave was launched in partnership with Germany in conjunction with the celebrations of this year's International Day for Biological Diversity, on 22 May. Through the campaign, all the world's schools have been invited to plant a tree in or near their school at 10 a.m. on 22 May every year, as a double gift for nature and for the children and youth of today and the educated citizens of tomorrow. The Green Wave is part of efforts to engage youth and children in the implementation of the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity—the convention on life on Earth.



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It was agreed that Airbus will support the communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) programme under the Convention, and will thus contribute to the celebration of the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010. Airbus agreed to support the Green Wave Initiative and will invite airlines and other industry partners to join the effort. Other ways of cooperation on the subject of biodiversity were also discussed and will be further explored in the coming months. A memorandum of understanding between the Convention Secretariat and Airbus will be signed in July at the Farnborough International Airshow, in the United Kingdom. This event, which will be celebrating its sixtieth anniversary this year, is attended by some 1,500 exhibiting companies from 35 countries and generally attracts more than 270,000 visitors.

At the end of his visit, Dr Djoghlaif stated, “Airbus has pledged to its employees, customers and shareholders to promote a world of innovation, a world of cultural diversity and a world of commitment. This is what protecting biodiversity is all about. Green business is the business of tomorrow and today is already tomorrow. Investing in the children and youth of today is investing in the educated citizens of tomorrow. This is what the Green Wave is about and this is what our framework agreement with Airbus is about.”

For more information visit greenwave.cbd.org and <http://www.cbd.int/ibd/2008/resources/teaching/>.